





Convening the Commons: Lessons from Cuba



Wendy Holm
Seniors Keeping Young
Bowen Island
January 9, 2012

-  Global perspective...
-  My work in Cuba...
-  How Cuba got here...
-  Where Cuba is going...
-  Why it's important...

I am:

- Professional Agrologist (+35 yrs)
- Farm Columnist (17 yrs)
- Speaker (Nat'l Speakers Bureau)
- UBC Lecturer LFS 302a
- Volunteer: Sustainable Cities ('04)
- Senior Project Advisor: Cuba
- Director Vancity Credit Union
- Grad Student (2nd time!)
- Master Management, Co-ops and Credit Unions
- Sobey School Business, St Mary's Univ, Halifax






The Effects of Climate Change on Agriculture, Land Resources, Water Resources and Biodiversity in the United States

U.S. Climate Change Science Program
Synthesis and Assessment Product 4.3
May 2008

Already effecting...

Increasing temperatures

Variable rainfall

Increasing crop failures

US military warns oil output may dip causing massive shortages by 2015

- Shortfall could reach 10m barrels a day, report says
- Cost of crude oil is predicted to top \$100 a barrel

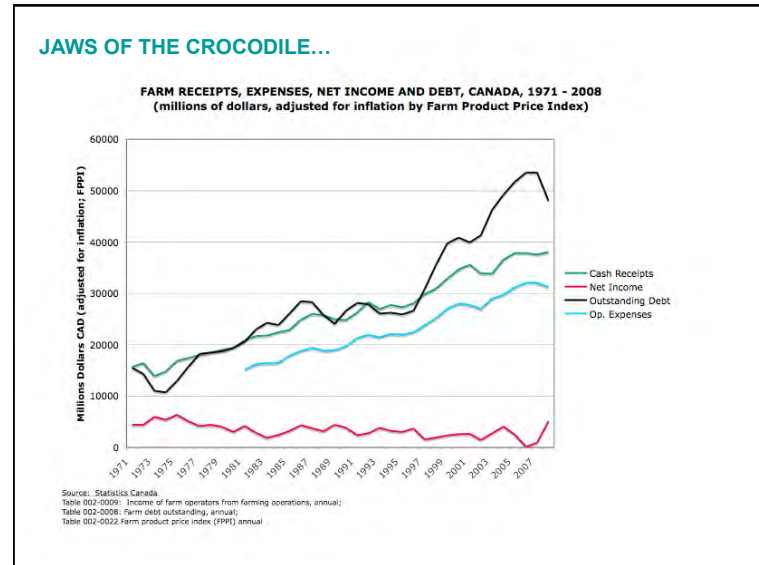
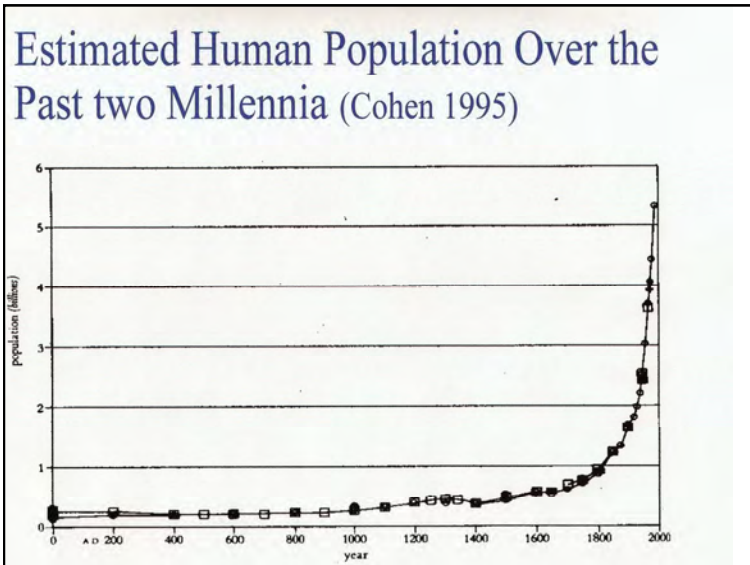
[Terry Macalister](#)
[guardian.co.uk](#), Sunday 11 April 2010 18.47 BST

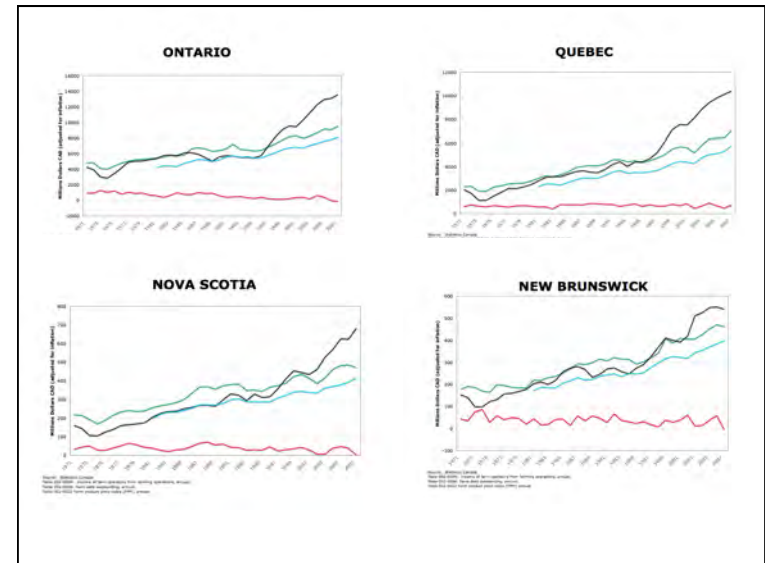
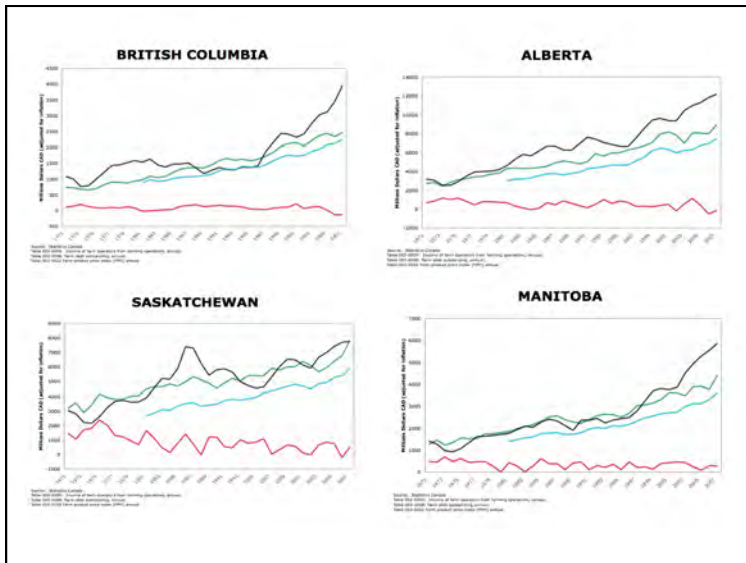
The Environmental Food Crisis

UN Environment Programme

25% loss in food production due to climate change, water scarcity, invasive pests, land degradation in this century...

- Industrial farming consumes 70% world's water
- 13 million tons of fertilizer used in 2007, 5 times more than 1960, only doubled crop yields
- +2.7 billion more people by 2050
Need 50% increase in food production to feed them
- GMO's reduce biodiversity, seed saving, farm \$
- Projected 25% loss in food production by 2050
 - Fuel versus food (reduce crop land by 18-20%)
 - Increased flood, drought (reduce yields by 5-25%)
- Global buy up of farmland
- income disparities widen, poverty increases





**SILENTLY,
Canada's
farmland is
being bought
up by foreign
investors...**

**Food is the
new oil...**

Concerns as an Agrologist...

- lack of policy respect for farmers
- globalization
- the failure of markets
concentration
- lack of farm "voice"



WHERE IS CUBA COMING FROM?



HISTORY

- Revolution 1959: Land Reform
- Alliance with FSU resulted in large state farms
- 1970's formation of agricultural cooperatives (ANAP) CPA's (collectives) and CCS's
- Cuba's economy driven by sugar



1989-91 - Collapse of former Soviet Union

- Cuba's economy thrown into darkness
- Could no longer sustain inefficient factory farms
Broke up into UBPC's (70% in cooperative hands)
- high input monoculture to world leadership in sustainable agriculture "overnight"

•Six Factors

1. Soils, water, climate
2. Literate farmers
3. Scientific capacity
4. Agric extension
5. Farm cooperatives
6. ANAP





El Vivero, one of Havana's largest co-op urban farms, Alamar



Produce from organoponico co-ops sold direct to community



Farmers' markets crisscross the city like swallows...



Beans are an important protein in the Cuban diet...



Market conversations as exciting as these carrots...



Worm composting is common throughout Cuba.



TODAY

Cutting edge practices...
Bio-controls replace chemicals

Only nation to achieve sustainability based on ecological footprint and social development index (WWF)

World leader in organic agriculture (1999 Right Livelihood Award Sweden)

Strong relations with Canada (uninterrupted since 1946)

MY WORK IN CUBA.....



SINCE 1998: 600 Canadian farmers in 30 Delegations



**University of British
Columbia's**

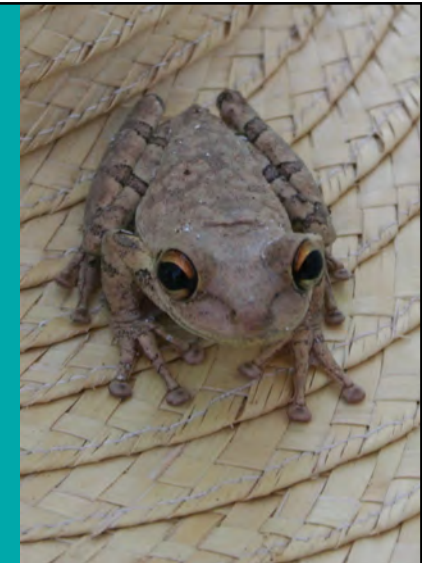
**LFS 302 International Field
Studies in Sustainable
Agriculture Cuba**

(began in 2005)



***International
Co-operative
Project:***

***Enhancing
Sustainable
Dairy
Production
Capacity in
Cuba***



Canadian Partners:



Canadian International Development Agency

Cuban Partner:






COMPONENTS:

1. International Farmer-to-Farmer Collaboration
2. Rotational grazing
3. Solar Energy
4. On Farm Feed Production
5. Best Farm and Herd Management Practices



BENEFITS OF ROTATIONAL GRAZING:

- Fresh food each day
- Greater nutritional uptake
- Cow's energy goes to milk production not foraging
- Reduced soil compaction
- Organic matter deposited where it is taken up





CPA 26 Julio

- 3 ha pedestals
- 36 ha rotational pastures
- 12 ha ration crops
- 5 ha grass forage trials
- 6.5 ha silvo-pasture
- 3 ha forestry

FIGURE 8 - PILOT PROJECT AND COMPLETION PROJECT
CPA 26 JULIO, Los Pinos, Nueva Paz



Women's Calf Brigade

- Hand-rearing of calves
- Separate at birth, individual housing and pasture
- Early introduction of water, ration, wean at 6 weeks

New and important role
for women in cattle raising



To recap:

rotational grazing

grass/legume
intensive pastures

solar energy

animal management

feed self-sufficiency








**PROJECT FUNDING:
\$236,787 CAD**

\$75,000	CIDA
\$57,000	Foundations
\$30,760	Farmers
\$16,969	Agri-Food Sector
\$44,400	Cdn Embassy - Havana
\$ 6,670	Canadians
\$ 1,988	UBC

TO GO: \$31,000



RESULTS?

Tripled milk production

- from 3.5 to 7.5 to 10 litres/cow/day (anticipate 15-20)

Income from the sale of milk is now 70% of receipts

Herd mortality dropped from 50 per cent to zero

CPA profitable and a model

2007 AMEC Award for Sustainable Development of
Natural Resources or Protection of the Environment

15th Annual Canadian Awards for International
Cooperation



WHERE IS CUBA GOING?

Co-operation



Walking the Walk

CUBAN LEADERSHIP IN

Sustainable Food Production
and
Cooperative Economics

provides a model for the world

NEED TO:

Support it. Spotlight it. Sustain it.



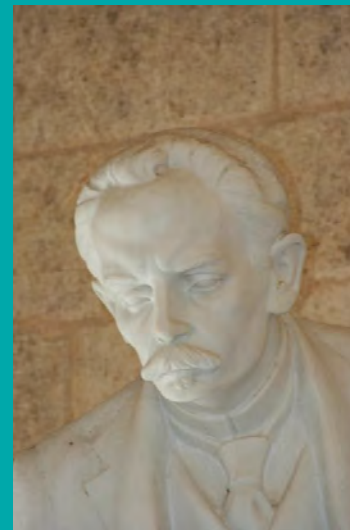
Talking the Talk

Jose Marti
(1853-1895)

Cuba's National hero

political theorist/activist, poet,
essayist, journalist,
revolutionary philosopher,
professor, publisher,

One of the greatest
turn-of-the-century
Latin American intellectuals



- **April 18, 2011: Lineamientos**
6th Congress Communist Party
- **Transition to co-op**
Worker control
- **Begin with agriculture -**
create 2nd tier co-ops
- **Production co-operatives**
Appropriate form for organizing labour in a socialist society



Walking the Walk and Talking the Talk
Coop Workshops in Havana December 12-16, 2011



The Revolution continues...

If you liked Cuba's leadership in sustainable food production, you're going to love her leadership in sustainable economics!





***Why Cuba's
lessons are
so
important...***



***Food security is
fundamental
to community
well-being...***

***Cooperatives
return community
control over the
economy***



***Esta
humanidad
tiene ansias
de justicia...
Fidel ...***

***To do is
the best
way of
saying...***

Marti







Posted on Facebook this morning...



Wendy Holm

My new year's resolution has something to do with reclaiming democracy. Just posted on Occupy Artists wall: I would love to meet with Occupy thinkers to suggest support for saving the Canadian Wheat Board. The destruction of this farmer controlled organization at the hands of the Harper government is inexcusable. The public opinion is massively behind the farmers on this (who are, manipulation notwithstanding, massively behind the CWB) but the buttons of government no longer work. This is about democracy. The Courts have said it is a matter of the rule of law. Charles Boylan (Discussion; Co-Op Radio) is now organizing a public meeting on the CWB in March. Things could begin to gear up now. This issue can be galvanizing. There is tremendous resonance. Hasta pronto... We must all be Revolutionaries. :)

TWEETED this morning...

@Wendyholm:

Calling Occupy: LETS TALK. i have an idea i think you will like... :)

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